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MEF 04013803

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Steve Schwartz
Type of Event: Telephone Interview
Date: December 30, 2003
Special Access Issues: Treated as UNCLASSIFIED
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Team Number: Three (Counterterrorism Policy)
Location: State Department Operations Center
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Interviewee Background

As a career Foreign Service Officer, Mr. Schwartz has served at various State Department ("State") posts including: Ethiopia, 1992-1994; the Horn of Africa, for five months; Berundi, for five months; Nairobi, covering Southern Sudan, for five months; Sudan Desk Officer, April 1996-April 1998; Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, covering Africa, 1998-1999; and Havana, 1999-2001. Mr. Schwartz is currently serving in Pretoria, South Africa.

US Government "USG" Priorities in Sudan

Mr. Schwartz said that the USG had four priorities in Sudan: terminating the Government of Sudan's ("GOS") support for terrorism; improving human rights; ending the civil war; and preventing Sudan from destabilizing the region. He stated that several terrorist groups were operating in Sudan such as: Hezbollah; the Palestinian Islamic Jihad ("PIJ"); the Egyptian Gama'a al-Islamiyya ("IG"); HAMAS (the "Islamic Resistance Movement"); Abu Nidal; the Armed Islamic Group ("GIA"); and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad ("EIJ"). Mr. Schwartz had never heard of Usama bin Laden ("UBL") until April 1996 when he became the Sudan Desk Officer. He commented that his file on UBL was thicker than all of the other terrorist groups combined.

Expelling UBL

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Mr. Schwartz stated that in January 1996, the USG began a secret dialogue with the GOS on terrorism. Initially, the dialogue included [redacted] senior State officials, such as David Shinn, Director for the Office of East Africa, and Tim Carney, US Ambassador to Sudan.

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Mr. Schwartz stated that the USG wanted UBL expelled because it believed that if UBL could be surrendered to a country in which he received no support from the government, UBL would be at a disadvantage. Mr. Schwartz did not recall whether the USG believed UBL would go to Afghanistan or whether the USG discussed with the Saudi's the idea of expelling UBL to Saudi Arabia.

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Mr. Schwartz commented that the discussions were failing regardless of Ms. Albright's intervention. He also stated that the USG did not offer the GOS any "reward" to expel UBL; the GOS's efforts were due to their desire to ingratiate themselves with the USG.

USG Policy Towards Sudan

Mr. Schwartz said that the USG's policy was to apply overwhelming pressure to and isolate the GOS to make their lives difficult. He commented that the USG adopted this policy because many of the senior policy makers could not bring themselves to support engagement with the GOS. By the time Mr. Schwartz became the Sudan Desk Officer, individual views on Sudan were solidified due to continuous insincerity by the GOS and

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Mr. Schwartz noted that the National Security Advisor during President Clinton's second term, Sandy Berger, the NSC's Director for African Affairs, Susan Rice, and the NSC's National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Dick Clarke, were driving Sudan policy. Mr. Schwartz commented that State was never able to overcome the NSC's objections to engaging the GOS. For example

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State could not get the Embassy re-opened. He said that State could not change people's attitudes about the Sudanese, who were generally considered to be untrustworthy.

Re-Opening Embassy Khartoum

In September 1997, State and the CIA agreed that the security situation in Sudan was such that the USG could re-establish a physical presence in Khartoum. They briefed Congress and elements of the NSC, including Jim Steinberg, the Deputy National

¹ Embassy Khartoum was closed in 1996 after the USG determined that Khartoum was too dangerous for Americans. Embassy staff was moved to the US Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya.

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Security Advisor, and Joe Wilson, Director for African Affairs. Mr. Schwartz was unaware if Mr. Clarke was briefed and assumed that Ms. Rice knew because of her pending nomination as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. When news of the re-opening was leaked to Barton Gellman of the Washington Post and Sandy Berger read the story, he called the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and forced her to reverse the decision.

Mr. Schwartz commented that officials at State were disappointed and angered by the reversal. Many people believed that no practical reason existed for the USG not to have a presence in Khartoum.

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Changing the USG's Policy Towards Sudan

Mr. Schwartz does not recall a Sudan policy debate in 1997. He said that State always wanted to engage the GOS despite being skeptical of them. They knew that the GOS would spin engagement to its own benefit and knew GOS cooperation was always dubious. However, he commented, that the USG had nothing to lose by engaging the GOS because the USG had nothing by not engaging the GOS. Mr. Schwartz stated that the people who were against engagement said that the GOS would simply "play" the USG by feigning cooperation and then giving the same line as they had done in the past. Such hardliners were opposed to anything that could be seen as giving the GOS a reward because, in their opinion, the GOS did not deserve a reward.

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Mr. Schwartz believes the isolation approach was unreasonable because not having an [redacted] presence hurt the USG. For example, he said that if the USG had an Embassy in Khartoum, it likely would have known that the al-Shifa plant was producing pharmaceuticals and not biological or chemical weapons.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the NSC focused primarily on Sudan's effect on the region. Ms. Rice believed that Uganda, Ethiopia, and the Sudan People's Liberation Army ("SPLA") were effectively fighting the GOS. As a result, she tried to garner more non-lethal support for their cause. Mr. Schwartz commented that this idea unraveled when the countries in the region went to war with each other. In addition, Ms. Rice wanted a comprehensive package of sanctions placed on the GOS all at once. State favored partial sanctions to allow investment in Sudan's energy and mining industry. However, Ms. Rice won and comprehensive sanctions were imposed all at once. Mr. Schwartz said this further demonstrates that the NSC was driving the USG's foreign policy towards Sudan. He noted that this remained unchanged until a change in personnel occurred at the NSC.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he talked once or twice per week with representatives of the GOS. He said that the GOS made many offers on counterterrorism. In his opinion, the GOS responded to over half of the USG's concerns as presented in the eight-point checklist. He believes that the US kept "moving the goal post." He emphasized that if

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the USG had an Embassy in Khartoum, the USG would not have had to rely as heavily on the GOS [REDACTED]

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When asked if he thought the USG's pressure on the GOS was working, he replied, "Yes." However, in his opinion, the USG needed to provide the GOS with a "carrot" to sustain their cooperation; but the NSC did not believe that the GOS was cooperating enough.

Recent Publications on Sudan

Mr. Schwartz was asked to comment on the accuracy of Richard Minter's book, *Losing Bin Laden*, and David Rose's article, "The Osama Files," in *Vanity Fair*. Minter claims that in July 1996, Mr. Schwartz met with Mansoor Ijaz, a Sudanese-American who wanted to "bridge the gap" between the USG and the GOS. The book alleges that Mr. Schwartz told Ijaz to tell Hasan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front ("NIF"), that, "We're watching every step he takes. He moves one step out of line, just one step out of line, we're going to have his ass."

While acknowledging the meeting with Ijaz, Mr. Schwartz emphatically denies ever saying those words. He commented that communication with the GOS was not a problem; the problem was that the USG did not trust the GOS. He stated that the USG did not need a self-appointed emissary. Ambassador Carney traveled to Khartoum one to two weeks per month and continued the engagement during the weeks that he was in Nairobi.

Mr. Schwartz said that he met with Ijaz because he was always interested in hearing information about activities within Sudan, and used it as an opportunity to clarify USG policy and remind people that they were not speaking on behalf of the USG. He commented that Ijaz's claims that he could get the GOS to stop supporting terrorism were not credible. He noted that Ijaz could not affect the real problem, which was changing the attitudes of the NSC staff.

The recent publications also claim that the GOS repeatedly made offers to the FBI to share intelligence. Mr. Schwartz does not recall any offers but notes that the rejections cited were consistent with Ms. Rice's policy of isolation.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he met with Janet McElligott, a DC-based lobbyist for the GOS, a couple of times. As with Ijaz, he met with her to receive information on Sudan and remind her of the USG's policy towards Sudan. Mr. Schwartz commented that he has never regretted not following-up with Ms. McElligott because her credibility was comparable to that of Ijaz and he felt no need to communicate with the GOS through her. He stated that if there was a missed opportunity, it was not re-opening the Embassy.

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